



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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SAIPAN TROPICAL EKIDEN RELAY RACE ON AUG. 29, 2015

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Toward the goal of attracting more visitors and expanding its sports tourism image, the Marianas Visitors Authority will host the Saipan Tropical Ekiden on Aug. 29, 2015, stretching its legs with the popular Japanese relay race.

“Ekiden” written in Japanese combines the characters for "station" (駅) and "transmit" (伝). The term originally referred to a horse or stagecoach that transmitted communication by stages.

The inaugural Saipan Tropical Ekiden will introduce two categories: Family Run and 4-Hour Relay Marathon. Under the Family Run category, a family of up to five runs a full 2K course together. Under the Relay Marathon category, a team of two to 10 members (including at least one adult) runs a full marathon, switching off every 2K.

The race will be held beginning in the late afternoon, starting at 4 p.m. at Garapan Fishing Base. The first two hours will be run along Beach Rd. through downtown Garapan. Around sunset at 6 p.m., the course will shift to Saipan Beach Pathway.

“Ekiden is pretty popular in Japan, especially among school groups that compete against each other,” said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. “We’re interested to introduce the event here in the Northern Marianas and hope to see at least 100 off-island visitors participate alongside our local runners.”

Mandatory orientation and race packet pick-up will be race day (Aug. 29) at 1:30 p.m. at

Garapan Fishing Base. Each participant must pick up their own packet. This will also be the deadline to register.

The registration fee for the Family category is \$50/family. The registration fee for the Relay category for U.S. and CNMI residents is \$15/each for runners 18 years and older and \$10/each for runners under age 18. Registrations must present a valid US or CNMI ID to qualify for the U.S./CNMI registration fee. The entry fee also includes entry to the awards banquet, a memorial towel, and a certificate of complete.

For more information, contact MVA Community Projects Coordinator Ed Diaz at ediaz@mymarianas.com or 670.664.3210.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct daily flights from Seoul and Busan and Jeju Air provides daily service from Seoul. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, to Saipan is available. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan with one stop. United States mainland connections can be made by Delta Air Lines to Saipan via Tokyo Narita, and United Airlines via Guam. Russian and Taiwanese visitors usually arrive via Seoul. For more information, visit www.mymarianas.com.

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